

SEPTEMBER 2005

## EMPLOYEE NEWSLETTER

# In the Loop

## Gas Prices Break Records & Ridership Climbs

FOR FOUR CONSECUTIVE WEEKS DURING AUGUST, GAS PRICES BROKE RECORDS ACROSS NEW MEXICO AND THE U.S., CAUSING MORE PEOPLE TO CONSIDER ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION.

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**ERA BAR-B-QUE**  
**WELCOME BACK DAYS**

If you've noticed more people on the bus lately, you aren't alone. Passenger boardings continue to rise. In fact, ABQ RIDE has seen a 17.6% increase in passenger boardings in the last three months of fiscal year 2005 compared to fiscal year 2004. According to ABQ RIDE Associate Director Leonard Garcia, this can be attributed to several factors.

"The record high gas prices have caused some people to think about alternative ways to get around town and the bus system is a logical and economical choice," said Garcia.

But the increase in ridership cannot all be attributed to the price of gas. In the last year, ABQ RIDE has also added Rapid Ride and stepped up marketing efforts which has significantly increased ridership on the Central Avenue corridor as well as feeder routes.

According to AAA New Mexico, the annual commute cost in Albuquerque is about \$7,142 for a small car and up to \$9,500 for a large one. This includes the price of gas and maintenance costs from general wear and tear on the vehicle.

While transit employees and their immediate families can ride for free, the general public pays \$28 for a monthly bus pass. "By using public transportation five days a week, this could easily put an extra \$7,000 back in your wallet by the end of the year," said ABQ RIDE Director Peter Behrman.



## Out of Retirement and Back on the Streets



**Motorcoach Operator Mike Toya makes his turnaround at the Alamosa Community Center on Coors Blvd. He has been an ABQ RIDE employee for 27 years.**

We just can't seem to keep Motorcoach Operator Mike Toya away from a bus. He retired Christmas Eve 2004 and spent the next five months trying to figure out what to do with his free time. He decided retirement was not for him just yet, and returned to ABQ RIDE in June 2005.

Toya began working for the Transit Department originally in 1978. Since then, he has seen a lot and said he enjoys the work. "I've seen passengers experience the cycle of life," Toya points out. "I've seen kids grow into adults and adults grow old."

During his time with ABQ RIDE, Toya worked his way to the top of the seniority list, getting first choice of routes. But now that he has returned after retiring, he has to start at the bottom again. On this day, he was driving the 155/158 Coors route.

"If I had my first choice, I would bid for the extra board," said Toya. "I like the variety of driving a different route from day to day."

## Hurricane Evacuees Get Free Bus Passes

Albuquerque residents have opened their hearts and even their homes to the hurricane victims of Louisiana and Mississippi. In the weeks following catastrophic Hurricane Katrina, ABQ RIDE has given out nearly 100 free monthly bus passes to the people displaced from the storm. Information booths lined the walls of the Convention Center and city workers were on hand to provide information about their departments. ABQ RIDE employees Mary Alice Ayze, Serena Pearson, Bonnie Torrez, Magda Savedra and Mike Summa answered questions, gave directions and simply helped former New Orleans residents get back on their feet and start a new life in the Land of Enchantment.

City employees who wish to donate to the Katrina Relief can donate at the Information Center at City Hall. All donations will be brought to the American Red Cross.



## GETTING TO KNOW OUR PROGRAMS THAT HELP THE COMMUNITY



For many people in the Albuquerque region, getting to work can be a real challenge. The cost of owning and operating a car may seem impossible to handle. Fortunately, the Job Access program can help!

The curb-to-curb service provides 120 trips to a job or job-training program for only 75 cents per trip, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It covers the areas of Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Corrales and Bernalillo, so many residents benefit from the service.

Since 1999, Job Access has helped over 2,400 people get to work. A wide variety of people have benefited from the service, such as young people just getting started in a job, people re-entering the workplace and individuals enrolled in a job-training program. For more information on how to become a Job Access rider or to tell your passengers about it, call 243-RIDE or visit our website at [www.cabq.gov/transit](http://www.cabq.gov/transit).

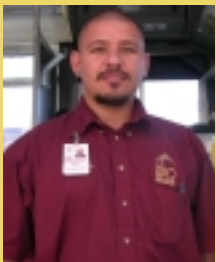
### Three Criteria to Qualify for Job Access

1. **Income-** Riders must be low income or receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
2. **Trip-** Job Access can only be used for a job or job-training program
3. **Location-** Riding the bus is not feasible due to location or hours

Job Access riders use the Mini-Rides during the day and a taxi service is used for night or after hours trips

## Going the Extra Mile

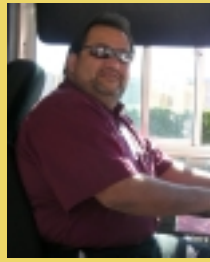
THE FOLLOWING EMPLOYEES HAVE RECEIVED AWARDS FOR GOING THE EXTRA MILE. THEY WERE NOMINATED BY CO-WORKERS OR CUSTOMERS.



Aldrete Salamon  
Motorcoach Operator



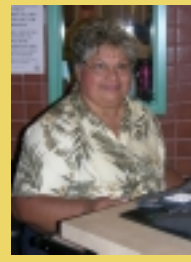
Antanacio Pacheco  
Motorcoach Operator



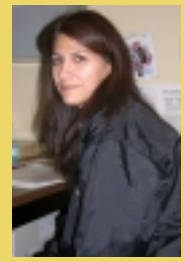
Clarence Gutierrez  
Motorcoach Operator



Greg Montoya  
Maintenance Mgr.



Mary Alice Ayze  
Customer Service Mgr.



Magda Savedra  
Customer Service Rep

We often go about our busy work schedules without ever thinking of the impact a simple smile or hello can have on a person. This month ABQ RIDE recognizes several employees that went the extra mile. Phone calls or letters were received from our customers thanking ABQ RIDE for these extremely courteous individuals.

### Customer Comments

*"Today we took our class on a field trip and had a great time. The driver (Clarence Gutierrez) was really nice to the children. I would also like to thank Mary Alice and Magda for planning our trip."*

*"Aldrete Salamon is a very courteous and respectful driver. He was extremely helpful."*

*"Antanacio Pacheco was very nice. He waited for me while I ran across the street to get on the bus." Thank you!*



# NEWS BRIEFS

AAU's 12 year old Viking basketball team would like to send their sincere thanks to the New Mexico Transportation Union for their sponsorship. Your sponsorship provided the Vikings with uniform jerseys and shorts. The Vikings participated in over eight AAU tournaments within the Albuquerque area. Our talented group of boys ended the summer season with two first place and two second place trophies. They also won first in their division in the NM Games with an invite to the Games of America in Colorado Springs. Your generous sponsorship has been truly appreciated by the team, coaches and parents. Thank you for supporting our youth.

Anthony Chavez



The 12-year old Viking Basketball Team sends their thanks to the New Mexico Transportation Union.



Eugene Vega cooks up burgers and hot dogs at the Daytona ERA Bar-B-Que.



Jolynn Maestas and Jay Faught welcome UNM students back from summer break and inform them about transit routes during UNM Welcome Back Days.



ERA Members Desiree Cawley, Angelo Metzger, Loretta Baca, Lisa Vargas, Ruben Minero, Bonnie Torrez, Rose Ann Ortiz, Celina Kozlowski, Eugene Vega



Patrick McClain, Tim Cynova, Susan Bryan, Ray Thomas and Marie Morra enjoy the ERA Bar-B-Que at Daytona.